

## Kinship Caregivers

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Last year, a number of events of interest to kinship caregivers occurred in North Carolina. The Division worked with an Inter-System Task Force to hold a conference in Winston-Salem which brought together family preservation and child advocacy groups with the aging network groups to share information and resources and learn about each other's concerns and accomplishments. In June, the first annual Grandcare Conference for North Carolina was held at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Senior Center. The conference was sponsored by the Grandcare Program at the Senior Center. The event was so successful, a second conference will be held this year.

The Division awarded five mini-grants to new and expanding kinship care support groups across North Carolina. There are now approximately 12 kinship caregiver support groups to help grandparents and other relatives connect with services, information and other families in similar circumstances. Information on these support groups is available on the Division of Aging web site.

When biological parents are unable or not willing to assume parental responsibilities, severe disruption of the family usually results. Often, loving grandparents and other relatives rear grandchildren, nieces and nephews. In 1990, there were approximately 137,000 grandchildren living with their grandparents in North Carolina. Based on the 1990 census figure and according to data on the estimated growth of the population of children (age 0-17) in North Carolina, there are now approximately 160,000 grandchildren living with grandparents in North Carolina. The Division is committed to working with these families by providing information and technical assistance to the groups that offer support to kinship caregivers.